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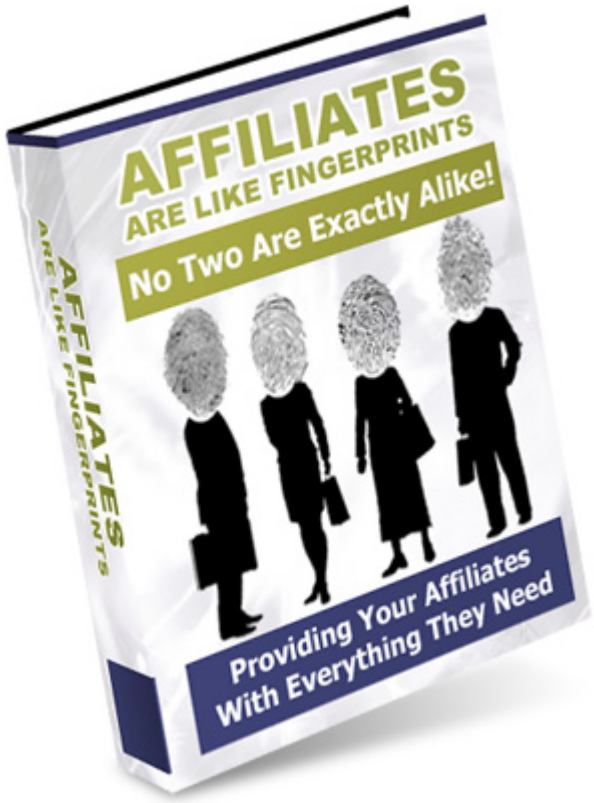
Affiliates Are Like Fingerprints

No Two Are Exactly Alike!



This report is brought to you by:

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INTRODUCTION

This report is for anyone that's doing business online and is currently using or plans on using affiliates to promote their products or services. No matter which niche they're in.

Since no two people are exactly alike, it just makes sense to assume that your affiliates will have different wants and needs when it comes to promotional methods and materials.

Even if you had only two affiliates, the odds of both of them having the same outlook and ideals would be extremely low.

So why is it that most product owners provide their affiliates with only a couple different types of promotional materials? And even worse yet, why do they usually provide them with only one or two ways to use them?

As an online business owner, running your own affiliate program, you should always keep this one thing in mind:

> Provide your affiliates with as many different ways to promote your products as possible.

While email marketing is and always will be a very important part of doing business online, providing your affiliates with two or three 'copy and paste' promotional emails isn't going to cut it.

Neither are a few sizes of banner graphics, for that matter.

The following pages list all the promotional materials that you should be providing for your affiliates.

SIDENOTE: These are also the materials that product and service owners should be providing you for your affiliate promotions.

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EMAILS

Most owners provide their affiliates with one or two emails that they can used as broadcast messages to their list.

Instead, you should provide them with 6 or 7 evergreen emails, with multiple headlines for them to choose from, along with as many specialty emails you can think of and in case you're not familiar with the term 'evergreen', here it is in a nutshell.

The term evergreen is used to describe content that is good for any day of the week or time of year. It's general information about your product or service that will be relevant today, tomorrow, next week or even next year.

The reason that you should provide them with at least 6 or 7 of these types of emails is due to the fact that studies have shown that a consumer needs to be exposed to an offer between 4-7 times before they decide to take action.

You would explain to your affiliates that they should automate the process by uploading all of the emails into their autoresponder. If they don't have an autoresponder service, recommend yours.

TIP: If you use Aweber or one of their private label clones, the system allows you to upload and "share" the series with others. Visit www.Aweber.com for information on this feature.

Each of these emails should focus on one or two features of your product or service. In the case of an ebook, you might want to include blurbs from different chapters to entice the prospect.

As for specialty emails, these could include a link to a 'secret' page that lets the prospect read the first chapter.

They could be used for free or limited time trials if you're selling software or memberships.

Another type of specialty email would be for holidays or special occasions, which is covered in detail in another chapter.

Along with multiple emails, you should always provide your affiliates with several different headlines for them to choose from.

Remember, your affiliate will know or should know what will work best for their list. Giving them more options will make things easier for them. The easier it is, the more likely they will be willing to promote for you.

One thing that you should keep in mind is that you should always encourage your affiliates to use your materials as a base for their own writings. No one likes to see the same exact email in their inbox from several marketers promoting the same product and especially if they are seeing emails with the same subject line.

You should also be using some sort of automated system that inserts your affiliate's link into the message for them.

Whether it's a full-blown affiliate control panel or a simple promotional page generator, this is a must.

BANNERS

When providing promotional graphics for your affiliates, don't limit yourself to a few common sizes, like 468x60 and 125x125.

Here's a list of all the banner sizes that are being used around the internet today:

120x240 Vertical Banner	120x300 Small Skyscraper	120x60 Button
120x90 Button	125x125 Square Banner	160x600 Wide Skyscraper
180x150 Side-bar Banner	234x60 Half Banner	240x400 Vertical Rectangle
250x250 Full Header Banner	300x100 3 to 1 Rectangle	300x250 Medium Rectangle
300x600 Half-page Ad	336x280 Large Rectangle	468x60 Standard Banner
720x300 Pop-up/under	750x100 Full Header	728x90 Leaderboard
80x50 Micro Button	88x31 Micro Bar	120x600 Skyscraper

But don't stop there! Provide a link on your banner page that says, "Don't see what you're looking for? Contact us if you need additional sizes."

Chances are, the affiliate that submits the request won't be the only one wanting it!

You should be providing these banners in static and animated versions as well as different color combinations. Remember, everyone's needs are different. It's not "one size fits all".

Once again, you should provide your affiliates with the code for the graphics with their links embedded.

You should also allow them to download the graphic and host it on their own server. This will not only save you bandwidth, but will allow affiliates promoting more than one program to upload the banners into their own rotator.

There are numerous banner design services online. Just be sure to do your research on the company you're considering. Take a look at their portfolio and ask for references before hiring them.

If they won't provide any references, chances are they didn't create the items in their portfolio.

You can also use services like Elance or Scriptlance that utilize escrow accounts for payments. This ensures that both parties are treated fairly and you, as the product owner, wouldn't have to release the funds until you're satisfied.

Both of those also have mediation services in place.

Here are their URL's:

http://www.scriptlance.com

http://www.elance.com

BRANDABLE REPORTS

As a product owner, brandable reports basically serve one purpose. They are used as lead generators. These are very powerful viral tools if quality content is used.

These reports are normally a summary of the product or service that you're selling. They can also raise the question of a common problem that the prospective customer may have, concluded with the solution, which of course would be your product or service.

But, once again, don't limit yourself. These reports can also be transcripts from a teleconference, in whole or in part, which you've done or have the rights to.

They can be a chapter or two of a book you're selling, whether it's an ebook or a physical book.

If it's a software product, you could create screenshots and explain how to use it.

You're only limited to your imagination. Nearly anything can be turned into a PDF for distribution.

Providing your affiliates with brandable reports will take some effort on your part, but is well worth it.

Viral PDF is a reliable software program and includes a very comprehensive user's manual.

www.ViralPDF.com

The creator also has an application that turns Word Documents into PDF's, but there is also a free alternative that you can use included in the Open Office suite of tools from Sun Systems.

www.OpenOffice.org

ARTICLES

Articles that are submitted to popular directories can be invaluable, but there aren't many affiliate program owners that are providing them for their affiliates. The ones that do provide them only provide one or two.

You should be providing them with one or two a month!

No matter which directories you recommend for them to use, they all allow a resource box at the end of each article. Although there are different formats used, they all allow a link to be added.

The more articles you provide, the more they can submit. This means more links back to your site!

There is some controversy about duplicate content, but if this were true, the article directories would be out of business.

Some directories require that the article be original.

To remedy this, instruct your affiliates how to edit the articles using tools and services available on the internet and don't forget to recommend these using your affiliate link!

Desktop applications like Dupe Cop and Word Flood allow the user to edit the article within the software while a service like Secret Article Converter automates the process with a couple clicks.

www.DupeCop.com

www.WordFlood.com

www.SecretArticleConverter.com

Each of these has its place in article editing. It all depends on the ability of the affiliate, so be sure to offer all three or something similar for them to use.

You should also encourage your affiliates to use articles as posts on their blogs after they've done some editing of their own.

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AUDIOS

While audios are often used on web sites or are made available for download on the product owner's site, they are rarely made available for use by the affiliate.

Before you provide your affiliates with an audio download, there is one thing that you'll need to keep in mind.

When you're recording the audio, don't mention specific URL's. Instead, say things like, "To learn more, click the link below".

This ensures that the prospect will click on your affiliate's link as opposed to visiting your web site directly.

That way, you can provide your affiliates with the code that will include the audio player, as well as the link with their affiliate id embedded in it.

You could even take that concept a step further and have a widget made for the affiliate to add the audio to their blog.

Or by using tools like Sonic Memo and Total Web Audio and a little bit of custom coding, you could create a page that would redirect the listener to your sales page as soon as the audio has finished playing.

www.SonicMemo.com

www.TotalWebAudio.com

If you decide that you'd like to use a teleconference that you have previously recorded, then you'll have to approach it a bit differently, so you protect your affiliate's commissions.

Chances are you referred to your sales page during the recording, so you'll want the prospect to be cookied before the listen to the recording.

In your affiliate/product management system, create a free product that your affiliates can send their referrals to. This way

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the prospect is credited to the referring affiliate and when the prospect decides to buy, they'll already be cookied when they arrive at the sales page.

For your advanced affiliates or the ones that have the technical know-how, you could simply provide them with the audio file itself and allow them to use it however they see fit.

Remember, everyone has different needs, so do your best to accommodate as many as you can.

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VIDEOS

With the popularity of streaming videos growing at an incredible rate, it just makes sense to utilize this type of media. As with audios, you see them on web sites but are rarely provided for use by affiliates.

Of course, providing your affiliates with a link to any page that has a video on it is still very effective, why not give them the option to decide what will work best for them.

You could provide a short thirty second advertisement video that affiliates could download and use as they please.

With all the different video branding software that's being released nowadays, you could even recommend one or two using your affiliate link and earn a couple bucks in the process. One of them is called, FLV Producer.

There's even a few that will brand YouTube videos with an affiliate link out there that are reasonably priced. Two of them are Affiliate Video Brander and Video Web Wizard.

www.FLVProducer.com

www.AffiliateVideoBrander.com

www.VideoWebWizard.com

REVIEWS

You see testimonials on nearly every successful product web site, but when it comes to product reviews, unless they were written by the affiliate themselves, they're not found too often.

One of the easiest ways to turn your affiliates into "product evangelists", is to have them create a Product Review category in their blog and provide them reviews to your products/services.

Once again, encourage them to 'make it their own' by editing the review using their own words.

If an affiliate has a loyal following, it won't take long for one of their readers to know if it's written by them or not.

Another way to get your affiliates to write their own review would be to allow them to purchase the product using their own link.

Most product owners don't allow this, but if this will make the difference between your affiliate buying your product or not, why not let them. Doing so will accomplish a couple things.

First, it will surely allow them to become a "product evangelist" for you and make it easier for them to write their own review.

Second, it will put more money into your pocket that may not have gotten there otherwise, even though you'll be paying them a commission.

Would you rather have a dime in your pocket
or a dollar left on the table?

Finally, it could just give your affiliate the thrill of getting their first, "You've Just Made A Sale" email in their Inbox!

Allowing affiliates to buy from their own link will not only increase sales, but as your affiliates 'tell their friends', it will increase your affiliate force too!

POP-UPS

Some people believe that pop-ups don't work. If this is true, then why are there developers out there that continue to create all sorts of pop-up software and services?

The reason is that they do work!

There are well-known marketers behind products like Focus Generator, You Can't Block This and Advanced DHTML Popup.

There's even been a developer that has taken pop-ups to a new level by creating a pop-up that contains a Virtual Smart Agent.

www.FocusGenerator.com

www.YouCantBlockThis.com

www.dpopup.com

www.VirtualSmartAgent.com

Now, aside from getting your affiliate to purchase these products or services (through your affiliate link, of course), you can provide your own "unstoppable" pop-ups for them to use on their own sites and it won't cost either of you a dime!

Dynamic Drive has a complete arsenal of DHTML tools that are freely available for your use as well as providing the code for your affiliates to use on their web sites. Their only requirement is that you don't remove their copyright box included with the code.

Even if you don't maintain your site yourself, this is definitely a site that your webmaster should have bookmarked!

http://dynamicdrive.com/dynamicindex8/dhtmlwindow/index.htm

The link above takes you to a page that offers several types of pop-ups, but be sure to have a look at the rest of the tools they have to offer. You never know, they could have just what you've been wanting for a long time or it could just give you some ideas.

404 ERROR PAGES

With billions of web sites online, this is surely the most underutilized piece of virtual real estate on the internet!

And oddly enough, it's one of the easiest methods of advertising to implement since the majority of the hosting services out there require you to simply upload a page named "404.shtml".

In that page, you can include anything that you'd normally display in a regular HTML page!

So, now that you know this, do you think you could provide your affiliates with a few 404 pages to promote your products with?

NOTE: Instruct your affiliates to contact their hosting service if upload of the 404.shtml page doesn't work.

But don't stop there!

Wordpress blogs have a built-in 404 Error system that you can have your affiliates exploit!

Since Wordpress uses themes that are loaded by core files, when a visitor tries to access a page that isn't there or has been removed, the system redirects them to an error page. That page displays a message along with a list of pages, archived months and categories that the visitor can choose from.

So, by simply providing your affiliates with a customized 404.php file, they can easily display your products along with or instead of the defaults! Cool, huh?

THANK YOU PAGES

How many times have you joined a mailing list and had to click on a confirmation link to verify your subscription?

And how many times after you clicked that link were you redirected to a page that was mostly blank that said, “Thank you, your subscription has been confirmed” and that was it?

Why is that? Why would anyone want to take a person that was actively seeking information from them and then leave them hanging like that?

How many of your affiliates are doing the same thing?

Why not provide them with thank you pages to redirect their subscribers to instead?

It could be something as simple as a single ad for a single product that you’re selling or as complex as an iframe that has their affiliate id embedded in the url.

The latter, with a couple lines of custom coding, could become a very powerful sales tool for you and your affiliates!

Your affiliate would upload the page once. Set it and forget it. You would have complete control over what is displayed and when, with each item automatically embedded with their link.

This same method can be used for product purchase thank you pages. I’m sure you’ve seen this wasted real estate also. A page with one lonely link to download the product zip file!

How about a page that contains all of the free downloads that you provide for your affiliates to promote your products with? A page that they could send their subscribers to as a way of saying “Thank you for being my subscriber”?

When it comes to using the real estate of a thank you page, there truly is no limit!

COUPON CODES

Utilizing coupon codes depends entirely on the shopping cart system or payment processor that you are using.

Coupon codes can be used for discounts during special promotions, free trials or given to certain affiliates in certain circumstances.

If your system doesn't have the ability to generate coupon codes, then you can simply create additional price points and pages for each product that you'd like to offer a discount or trial for.

In either case, they should be used on a limited basis for special promotions to create urgency.

PPC & SIGNATURE ADS

Pay-Per-Click ads are similar to the ads that you would see in the classified section of your local newspaper.

These are short, usually three or four line, ads that need to capture the readers eye immediately.

As with a sales page, the headline is going to be the most important part of the ad because that will be what makes the reader want to look at the rest of the ad and ultimately 'earn' their click-through.

The same holds true for signature ads. These are primarily used in forum profiles but they can be equally effective when used as a signature in your affiliate's emails.

The best way to decide which ads work best is to do some testing yourself and be sure to encourage your affiliates to make them their own by editing them to fit their audience.

‘HOLIDAY’ PROMOS

Did you know that there are over fifty holidays celebrated throughout the year in the US and Canada alone?

This doesn’t included special days like Groundhog Day, Arbor Day or even YOUR Birthday! This doesn’t include holidays from the rest of the world! Phew! Think about that for a second.

You’ve seen them, people posting videos of them wearing crazy hats or costumes on their blogs.

With over fifty holidays in North America alone, that’s almost one a week for the entire year that you could run some sort of special promotion for your products or services.

And how about state specific holidays?

If that doesn’t get your holiday idea juices flowing, what will?

And then you can add to the mix, all the giveaways that have been popping up over the past few years, you literally have the opportunity to be making sales and building your list year round!

CONCLUSION

The bottom line, when providing your affiliates with promotional tools, is that the more options you give them, the more likely they will find something that they'll want to use.

Once you have created all of these materials for one of your products or services, it's just a matter of replicating them for the next product and the next and so on.

And don't feel that you have to do all of these things yourself either. Even if you don't have the money to outsource everything, use the barter system. Offer your services in the line of your expertise to someone that can provide you with what you need to be done.

Are you a whiz at creating videos but hate writing ads? Make a trade with someone.

And do you know where the very first place that you should look for these barters? In your own affiliate force! Make sense?

What better way to make them feel like they are part of your team and when someone does step up to the plate, let everyone else know about it! Praise them and give them credit for what they've done for you!

By doing so, you'll not only ensure that they'll help you out again, but it will also encourage others to do the same. Let's face it, everyone likes to be congratulated for a job well done, not to mention seeing their name "up in lights" for all to see!

In every case of the promotional materials provided in this report, you have been reminded to have your affiliates do some editing to make them 'their own'.

If you can't instruct them on how to do it, find someone that can. Offer them the opportunity to speak to your affiliates and offer whatever product or service they are selling. "Co-opetition" goes a long way in a situation like that.